



Focus on Local Source Control Specialists in Puget Sound

The Problem:

In the Puget Sound area, more than 30,000 businesses likely generate hazardous wastes, yet only the state's larger businesses -- about 1,000 of them -- are in the state's hazardous waste tracking system. Ecology's compliance efforts focus on these larger businesses, while local governments assist the remaining, smaller ones. Given the sheer volume of smaller businesses, hard-pressed local governments could use some help.

Many very small businesses use or handle hazardous wastes. For example:

- Materials used in construction contain a number of toxic chemicals: treated wood may have arsenic, lamps and thermostats contain mercury; paints, vinyl, carpet and plywood all have Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs).
- Used solvents, used oil and spent antifreeze from auto repair shops can get into floor drains, contributing heavy metals and Halogenated Organic Compounds (HOCs) to Puget Sound.
- Ink and used fixer from print shops can contain heavy metals that should not go into the garbage or down a drain.
- Cleaning products contain all kinds of chemicals that, unless used and stored properly and carefully, can be toxic, corrosive, flammable or reactive.

If mishandled or stored outdoors, these chemicals may end up in stormwater and wastewater, and eventually in Puget Sound, where they enter the food chain and threaten human health. While many local governments have programs intended to help small businesses safely manage hazardous and solid waste, most lack capacity to do what is required to provide assistance to the large number of small businesses that handle toxic chemicals on a daily basis. This means businesses too often don't get the advice they need to reduce pollution and those who safeguard the environment don't get even the information they need to determine what is escaping into the environment.

The Solution

Ecology will fund contracts for up to 10 Local Source Control Specialists throughout Puget Sound to help small businesses reduce or eliminate sources of pollution through active and direct outreach. The Local Source Control Specialists will be county employees, allowing local governments to increase their capacity to provide on-site compliance and toxin reduction assistance to small businesses throughout the Sound. Training will be provided by Ecology staff as will educational materials and information on safer alternatives. Reporting by the Local Source Control Specialists to Ecology on results will allow Ecology to show the collective pollutant reductions in Puget Sound.

If you need this publication in an alternate format, please call the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program at 360-407-6700. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.

Ecology is seeking \$2.026 million in the 2007-2009 budget for this effort from the Local Toxics Control Account. One Ecology FTE will be hired to carry out this effort.

Over the next two years, the project will:

- Identify the various small businesses that are using toxic chemicals.
- Work with business operators to safely manage hazardous wastes and reduce or eliminate their use of toxins by finding safer alternatives.
- Report on the collective pollutant reductions to date in Puget Sound.

Without funding

Toxic chemicals will continue to accumulate in Puget Sound through storm water and wastewater.

The state's opportunity to more closely partner with local governments on reducing toxic threats will be lost.

The state will not be able to provide prevention help for businesses that are inadvertently contributing to pollution problems; toxic chemicals will continue to be mishandled in ways that cause unnecessary costs and burdens for them and avoidable impacts to the environment that could contribute to costly cleanups over time.